FACT SHEET PROPOSED MINERAL WITHDRAWAL NEAR GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

What was announced today?

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced his decision to make an emergency withdrawal for six months of approximately 1 million acres of federal lands near Grand Canyon National Park from hard rock mining claim location and entry under the 1872 Mining Law while the Department continues to evaluate whether to withdraw these lands from new mining claims for 20 years. Valid existing claims are not affected by this announcement.

What are the next steps?

A Public Land Order making an emergency withdrawal of six months will be published in the *Federal Register* within the next week. A final EIS is expected to be released to the public in the fall of 2011.

Why is this action of an emergency withdrawal necessary?

On July 21, 2009, the Department published a notice in the Federal Register of a proposed withdrawal of approximately 1 million acres of federal locatable minerals on both BLM and Forest Service lands in northern Arizona from location and entry under the 1872 Mining Law and that action began a two-year temporary segregation period that expires on July 20, 2011. This action is necessary to prevent the lands from opening to new mining claim location and entry under the 1872 Mining Law when that segregation expires.

What is the preferred alternative?

The preferred alternative that will be included in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the full proposed withdrawal of approximately 1 million acres of BLM and Forest Service lands located near Grand Canyon National Park from mining claim location and entry under the 1872 Mining Law for 20 years, subject to valid exiting rights. The selection of a preferred alternative is required as part of the development of an EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act. The EIS to analyze a proposed withdrawal of these lands of up to 20 years is currently under development and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2011.

Has there been public input?

Over 295,000 public comments were received during the public comment period on the EIS, which included an initial period of 45 days and was extended 30 days to allow for additional public comment. The interagency team worked with eleven other cooperators and held thirty-one consultation meetings with tribes.

Who are the cooperating agencies?

U.S. Forest Service; National Park Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Geological Survey; Arizona Game and Fish Department; Arizona Geological Survey; Arizona Department of Mines and Mineral Resources; Arizona State Land Department; Hualapai Tribe; Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians; Coconino County, Arizona; Mohave County, Arizona; Kane County, Utah; San Juan County, Utah; and Washington County, Utah.

What lands are affected by today's announcement?

These lands are within portions of the Grand Canyon watershed next to Grand Canyon National Park and contain significant environmental and cultural resources as well as known uranium deposits. The Grand Canyon National Park is an iconic American landscape and World Heritage Site and draws 4.4 million visitors each year, is home to numerous rare, endemic and specially protected plant and animal species and contains vast archeological resources and sites of spiritual and cultural importance to American Indians. The Colorado River and its tributaries that flow through the watersheds of Grand Canyon National Park supply water to agricultural, industrial, and municipal users, including the cities of Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

What is an emergency withdrawal?

During an emergency withdrawal, like a temporary segregation, the location of new hard rock mining claims under the 1872 Mining Law would be prohibited, however ongoing or future mining exploration or extraction operations on valid pre-existing claims could continue. The temporary segregation expires on July 20, 2011.

Does this announcement affect oil, gas, coal, or other non-hard rock energy resources in the proposed withdrawal area?

No.

How many mining claims are there?

At the time of the proposed withdrawal and temporary segregation, 10,600 hard rock mining claims existed. Today, approximately 3,500 claims remain. The emergency withdrawal will help maintain the status quo until a final decision is made on the proposed withdrawal.

Where can I go to find out more information?

Please visit http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/mining/timeout.html